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Proceedings of the
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Introduction to the Proceedings of PDC 2002 the seventh biennial Participatory Design Conference

Since 1990, the Participatory Design Conferences have brought together researchers and practitioners from a variety of disciplines and work traditions, probing the social scope and practices of design of technology. A core concern has been to understand how collaborative design processes can be based on participation of the people affected by the technology designed.

The involvement of users and the focus on human-centered design, addressing the design of technology 'through the interface', were pioneered by contributions to the Participatory Design Conferences. Debates within the participatory design community have contributed to the development of a new IT design field emphasizing simultaneously the need for thorough studies of the context of use, the relevance of an open and participatory design process, and concern for the political aspects of the technology in use.

Today the collaborative nature of the design process and the need to involve a large variety of stakeholders has gained wider acceptance. At the same time a fundamental uncertainty concerning the scope and directions for the design of technology has created a growing interest in innovative approaches to participation and design.

With the theme *Participation and Design*, the Participatory Design Conference 2002 invited researchers, designers and other practitioners to present *inquiries into the politics, contexts and practices of collaborative design work*. We invited contributions from all design fields such as architecture, urban planning, engineering, interaction design and others (such as the fine arts) with a focus on understanding collaborative design work. The contributions assembled in these proceedings reflect this invitation.

With John Habraken and Barbara Holub two accomplished speakers from the fields of architecture and art have been invited as sources of inspiration for the debates about participation and collaborative design practice.

John Harbraken is a well-known Dutch architect who worked for many years as a professor at MIT in Boston. In his recent book *The Structure of the Ordinary* (MIT press, 2000) he sums up his perspectives on the built environment as always open and evolving. He has had a lifetime commitment to the idea of participation, since the late 1950's and early 60's. Harbraken's perspectives are original and provocative, genuinely interested in enabling rather than in promoting an ideological or political position. Moreover, from the start, he has been thinking about how design and participation relate to one another, rather than promoting participation and accepting the outcome, whatever that might have been.

Barbara Holub from Austria works as an artist in-between urban planning and artistic interventions with a focus on communication in public spaces. She often sets her work in contexts outside the arts – inviting people into a staged garden fence situation, collaborating with employees in developing visual statements. Stimulating participation is an occasion for questioning the routines of everyday life, exploring memories, and transcending the roles of the individual within given contexts and functions of places. Barbara Holub, who also taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago, School of Art and Design, TU Wien, has developed a variety of methods of engaging actors, from interviews to games and performances.

The proceedings are structured in four parts: full papers, work-in-progress, workshops, and art/work exhibition. It is for the first time that a PD Conference invited submissions for an art/work strand, which exhibited artwork created as part of the research process. The focus on art as process, collaborative authorship and interactivity, in the computer aided, enhanced or generated context makes exhibitions such

as these of high relevance for designers. As in the arts in user-centered design process, the distinction between the designed artifact, the context of use, and the process of design may become blurred.

The themes of the academic work included in these proceedings comprise old and ongoing concerns as well as new ideas, coming from both inside and outside the PC community. Many contributions focus on methods and techniques, on how to develop design competence, involve and/or imagine users and contexts of use, examining the boundaries between design and use, discussing the roles of designers and/or participant observers in users' everyday activities or in the design process, addressing issues of power and politics.

While methods and techniques are an old topic within PD, there is an increasing diversity of methods being developed and practiced and some of them have been substantially elaborated. Also, the tradition of grounding one's research in fieldwork, ethnographic studies, and in inquiries on contexts of use has been both confirmed and strengthened. There is a shift of attention from old to relatively new contexts of use. The technologies and artifacts that are examined range from the future office to applications in health care, mobile technologies, and large distributed systems. Some of the papers explore the relationships between PD work and such varied fields as work design, engineering, interaction design, web design, product development, home services, curriculum design, architecture, and urban planning.

Although collaborative design practices are widespread there is still some way to go to better understand them on the one hand, to better connect them to political concerns with user participation and democracy on the other hand. The 'art of doing PD' continues challenging design practitioners of all kinds.

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Judith Gregory, *University of Oslo, Norway*
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KEYNOTE SUMMARIES

THE WAY ARTIFACTS EVOLVE IN USE

Participation as a key to a new professionalism

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To have a healthy living environment the energies of inhabitation must animate environmental change. The 'Open Building' approach, as supported by a network of practitioners and academics, seeks to re-introduce the powers of inhabitation in residential construction. They see the fine-grained large project as the future. Participation, recognizing inhabitation as the key factor, is not a goal by itself but a means to achieve a healthy and sustainable environment. It leads to new professional skills and knowledge:

1) Understanding environment.

Knowledge of the built environment as an autonomous and complex phenomenon should justify architectural intervention, much in the way knowledge of the human body must justify medical intervention. As always, patterns of change reveal constant laws. Transformation, therefore, is the key to our knowledge of environment. The concept of 'dominance' reveals itself as one of the major constants in environmental dynamics and is discussed by way of example.

2) Design methodology

Environmental change also demands distribution of design intervention. The reality of this distribution challenges Modernism's top-down centralized design ideology. Wherever design distribution takes place, coordination and interface management become important concerns. Methodology provides tools in response to them. Here again, 'dominance' is illustrative. It allows us to finally discard 'function' as the basis for design, and to achieve a more open ended way of working by looking for 'capacity'.

3) Form behavior

Environmental transformation is bound to social convention as well as to physical reality. Our interventions, therefore, are not random but reflect 'form behavior' that we are innately familiar with. A new generation of CAD programs is needed to make the computer understand such 'behavior of form' as well. Once more, the concept of 'dominance' is important. It allows us to convey behavioral knowledge to the computer, making the latter a true design participant.

"May I show you my stamp collection?" -the artist as invited guest with unpredictable outcome

Barbara Holub
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our western society is based on principles of control, evaluation, validation or success, which implies that the individual is constantly called upon to mirror himself/herself according to the specific rules imposed upon him/her by his/her respective social and cultural context. this means that all our actions are much rather guided by the notion of control and awareness of "performance" commensurate with the image of the company than the "enactment of the self". my projects aim at questioning these roles as well as the role played by the artist in the game, and at giving space to "what doesn't fit".

in this presentation I would like to give you an overview of some recent projects to show my artistic interest in direct „enactment“, the strategies I've been developing, and how the projects can be read as an in-between for engaging in almost childlike play and yet at the same time expose precise structures of the environment or „set“ I'm investigating.

i usually try to place and/or communicate the projects both in the art context as well as in that of an enterprise or specific professional environment. questions regarding access to the situation I choose as field of artistic investigation, differ according to the given parameters. whom do I tell what? what are the expectations of the people participating - what are my expectations? what do I make visible/ communicate to the viewer, and which experience remains visible only to the participants?

the art practice I've been developing is based on creating specific sets, offering an experience to the participants, which they might not have had in their everyday life. the seemingly harmless question posed by the title of this presentation itself addresses the hidden potentials of the situation it points at. the crucial question is: what happens then? the moment of seduction, of giving up control, of submerging in the situation opens up a field of unforeseen developments.

since the artist is often still considered to be somewhat of a „court jester“ I play with this role for intruding into systems usually eager to control exactly what is supposed to happen. at the same time I, as director, have to be in control of what's happening. setting precise rules is a prerequisite for achieving a different experience, but it also questions mutual agreements, conventions and structures of hierarchy and order within society as well as patterns of producing a certain aesthetics of art. this contradiction served as basis for Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg in creating „dogma“ in 1995. when they decided to adhere to very "restrictive" rules, the 'dogma', they more than upturned an increasingly boring and affirmative film production. their films were so ambivalent that they can no longer be reduced to questions of "what's the message?". their structure of production relates directly with other structures inherent to society and it is precisely this lack of distance that enables aesthetics to coincide with content. filmmaking according to "dogma" as well as art productions like mine directly mirror the social and political/ economical system we live in. the dichotomy between author and recipient/ viewer is at stake as well as the security of the safe role that goes with it. in my work I try to achieve a state of the pieces in-between fiction and documentary so that it's up to the viewer to decide where he/she puts him/herself.

this type of art production also questions the importance of efficiency in our society. these projects offer no evaluation or measurability as guidelines for holding on. companies who have involved me as artist to

produce a piece had to experience that: the artist only serves his/ her own purposes. when companies increasingly try to adopt art practices for their own interests in buying the artist as critical voice, we have to be even more critical about this/ our position along the borderline pertaining to the same system. we must nevertheless make visible those small and uncalculated individual incidents or "flaws" which add to the pleasures of life although their objective may be to contradict neo-liberal interests.

no solutions since there are no problems posed - reading society under the premise of producing an art piece means to refuse an evaluation. no fear and, to quote slavoj zizek's famous phrase: "love your symptoms like yourself".

* this is also the title of an exhibition curated by maia damianovic for the "steririschen herbst" in graz 2002.